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**Federal GAO Releases Study on Cameras in Appeals Courts,**  
**Cites Florida Supreme Court as an Example**

TALLAHASSEE -- Following up on a July 2015 visit to the Florida Supreme Court, the U.S. Government Accountability Office in Washington released a report Tuesday to inform members of Congress about current practices in broadcasting appeals court arguments around the world. The study is meant to help as Congress studies the possibility of similar broadcasts at the U.S. Supreme Court.

“It is flattering,” said Chief Justice Jorge Labarga, “that the U.S. Congress turns to the Florida Supreme Court as it looks at ways of increasing public access to the highest court in the nation. Considering the other courts they reviewed, it shows that we have set a world-class example.”

The GAO report includes detailed information about the Florida Supreme Court’s successful program to broadcast all of its oral arguments. Every Florida Supreme Court argument has been broadcast on the Web, on cable television, and via satellite since that program began in 1997. Videos also are archived for access any time.

The most notable were live worldwide broadcasts of arguments in the presidential election cases of Bush v. Gore in late 2000.

The Florida Supreme Court has a longstanding commitment to live camera coverage that dates to its adoption of a permanent rule in 1979 allowing cameras into trial and appeals court proceedings statewide. The permanent rule followed four years of studies in which cameras were permitted into Florida trial court proceedings on a more limited basis starting in 1975.
Chief Justice Labarga, 63, has made openness and access to justice key themes of his administration as head of Florida’s entire judicial branch of government. Labarga will serve as Chief Justice through June 2018.

A copy of the GAO report is attached and also is available at this Web address:


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